

Thank goodness, we've had 9 months of peace. And we had these elections, and they did pretty well, considering what they've been through the last 4 years. And I thank all of you who supported what I tried to do there. But you think about the world that we're living in. Look at Bosnia; look at Northern Ireland; look at the Middle East; look at what South Africa went through. Look at what happened in Burundi, for goodness sakes, over tribal differences. Why?

All over the world there are people who make a living getting political power, getting military power, staying in power by inflaming the passions of people, by trying to get them to look down on their neighbors. "You really matter because you're not them; you're not them." That's what they say in the Middle East, "You're not them." That's what they said in Bosnia. They were slaughtering each other's children because they weren't Croatian or Serbian or Muslim. And they were biologically completely indistinguishable. It was an accident of history that got them into different so-called ethnic or religious groups.

And you look around this crowd today—I see Asian-Americans. I see African-Americans. I see Nordic-Americans. I see Irish-Americans. I see German-Americans. I see Americans of Central European descent. I see Indian-Americans and Pakistani-Americans and Native Americans and you name it. You know why? Because we are trying to beat that curse that is bedeviling the rest of the world and threatens the 21st century.

And so when you see—[*applause*—that's the last thing I want to leave you with. I don't want to build a bridge that you only get to walk across because you're better than somebody else because of an accident of birth. I want to build a bridge that anybody can walk across if they say, "I believe in the Constitution, the Declaration of Independence, the Bill of Rights. I believe in the fundamental dignity of all people." And if you're willing to show up for work tomorrow, play by the rules, and love this country the way I do, I'll hold your hand, and we'll build a bridge we can walk across together. And if you'll do that, we'll have a great victory in November.

Thank you, and God bless you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 3:20 p.m. at Senator Harkin's 19th annual steak and pork-chop fry held at National Balloon Classic Field. In his remarks, he referred to entertainers Tom Arnold and Jerry Jeff Walker; Mike Peterson, chair, Iowa Democratic Party; and the Senator's daughters Jenny and Amy Harkin.

Remarks Announcing Anticrime Initiatives and an Exchange With Reporters

September 16, 1996

The President. Thank you very much. Let me just make a couple of comments about this. First of all, I want to thank the Attorney General for the extraordinary effort that she has made to deal with the problems of youth violence and particularly gang-related violence and crime in our country. This report is further evidence that our efforts are actually working and that we can bring down the level of youth violence and gang-related violence in our country if we'll work at it in a systematic, disciplined, tough way.

We have a straightforward approach: more police on the street, guns and drugs off the street. We are putting 100,000 police in our neighborhoods, and that's a job we need to finish. The assault weapons ban, the Brady bill are making a difference. We've just established a registry for sex offenders; that will make a difference. "Three strikes and you're out"—that law is being implemented, and it is making a difference.

We've also advocated community-based solutions: curfews, strict truancy enforcement, school uniform options. Last week I announced an initiative for comprehensive drug testing for prisoners and parolees in State prisons that access the Federal funds for prison building. This will make a difference.

Now, there's no question that the battle against violent crime and drugs begins with neighbors looking out for neighbors, parents looking out for their children, citizens linking arms with law enforcement. We have to have a community-based approach to this. But the Federal Government must do its part as well.

The level of violent crime in our country has gone down for 4 years in a row. The level of killing by juveniles has gone down now

for 2 years in a row, and the juvenile crime rate overall finally showed a drop. But we are a long way from where we need to be in this country. We have to keep working on this until we have dramatically reduced the level of crime and violence.

That is why I want to build on a particular area of promise, using the antiracketeering RICO statute to fight criminal gangs. Using RICO, the United States brought criminal mobs to their knees. Using RICO, the United States helped to smash the Medellin drug cartel. And today we are using RICO to break up criminal gangs. As the Attorney General has reported, since the end of 1992 we have more than doubled the number of gang-related RICO prosecutions. So far this year, nearly 40 percent of the RICO prosecutions involved violent gangs.

RICO prosecutions against gangs are lengthy; they're complex. We need to give our prosecutors the time they need to make the best case. That's why I am calling on the Congress to expand the statute of limitations for violent crime and gangs from 5 years to 10 years. The statute of limitations for bank fraud is 10 years; it should be no less for violent crime.

The days when Washington was more interested in asking who's to blame than what to do about a crime are long since passed now. We've made a good start in fighting violent crime and gangs, but we must keep going until the job is done.

And again, Madam Attorney General, I want to thank you for this and for the work it represents. Thank you.

Iraq

Q. Mr. President, Saddam Hussein appears to have pulled in his horns. Does that mean the U.S. can forgo any immediate further air strikes?

The President. Let me answer you as clearly as I can. We have sought no confrontation with Saddam Hussein; we never did, and we don't now. We do seek to enforce the no-fly zone and to do it under conditions in which our pilots will be safe. And I will do the very best I can to make the right judgment on that question, listening to my military advisers about the facts.

And that is the only answer I can give you to that question. My concern is that we limit Saddam Hussein's ability to threaten his neighbors, that we do it with the no-fly zone, and that in doing so we keep our pilots safe.

Safety of American Troops

Q. Mr. President, Kuwait has indicated now that it is willing to accept more American troops. At the same time, the Pentagon has released a study about the safety of troops. Could I ask your reaction to that study, and what do you tell the people who are going into that region again that—where some don't like American troops on Arab soil?

The President. Well, first, I want to thank General Downing. I think he did a very good job, and he did exactly what I asked him to do. I said, "I want an unvarnished, blunt, straightforward report. I want you to take a hard line here because we have got to do everything we can to ensure the safety of the troops." And that is exactly what we did, and the Pentagon and the American people are in his debt.

Now, I had a meeting with Secretary Perry on Friday evening, and he had been briefed, obviously, on the outline of the recommendations of the Downing report. He said that the Defense Department was already in the process of implementing virtually all of the recommendations of the Downing report, that he fully agreed with them, and that we would be aggressive in the implementation of the recommendations.

So I think it's fair to say that we know we're living in a world in which terrorism is a bigger problem and in which Americans may be the target of terrorists, particularly Americans in uniform. And as we know more about what we can do to protect them, we intend to do everything we can. I give you the same answer I gave to Jim [Jim Miklaszewski, NBC News] on the previous question. And we are going to aggressively implement the Downing report.

Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:15 a.m. in the Oval Office at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Gen. Wayne A. Downing, USA (ret.), director, Downing Assessment Task Force.

Remarks in Cincinnati, Ohio

September 16, 1996

The President. Thank you very much. Thank you. Mayor Qualls, I am delighted to be back in Cincinnati, and I thank you for making me feel welcome again. And I thank you for doing such a good job as mayor. And Representative Mallory, that's the most unusual welcome I ever had, but I liked it. We may have to have a training session to get that down and use it in some other places.

I wonder if you're all in such a good humor today because the Bengals won yesterday, I think that may be it.

Audience members. We love you, Bill.

The President. Thank you.

I want to say a special word of thanks to Senator John Glenn for flying down here with me and for being an absolutely wonderful United States Senator for Ohio and for all the United States. Thank you, John Glenn.

I thank the leaders of the FOP. Thank you, President Gil Gallegos, for that wonderful statement. Thank you, Pete Ridder. Thank you, Jim Pasco, the executive director of the FOP; Steve Young, the president of the Ohio FOP; and Mike Tenore, the trustee of the Ohio FOP. I am very proud to have the endorsement of an organization representing 270,000 rank and file members of law enforcement who put their lives on the line every single day for the rest of us. I thank you for it.

As Gil said, and as Pete said, for 4 years I've worked hard to stand with the police officers of America, and I am profoundly honored that they decided to stand with me for 4 more years. And I thank them very much.

Folks, I want to talk to you just a moment about what I hope we'll do in those next 4 years to make our streets safer and to make our children's future brighter. Everybody knows now—I hope they do anyway—we've been out talking about where we are now compared to where we were 4 years ago. We pursued a strategy of opportunity for everyone, responsibility from everyone, and an American community that includes every person, without regard to race or gender or income or background, everybody that's willing to work hard and play by the rules should be part of our American community.

This strategy is working. The economy is much stronger. The economy in Ohio—the unemployment rate has dropped from 7 percent to 4.8 percent. It's the lowest in nearly 8 years in the country as a whole. Our auto industry is number one in the world again for the first time since the 1970's. A lot of people in Ohio are part of that ranking, that number one ranking. We have 10½ million more jobs, wages are rising again for the first time in a decade. On October 1st, 10 million American workers will get an increase when the minimum wage goes up. And I'm happy about that.

Yesterday I was in Iowa on a farm in Indianola, and I met, as I often do when I'm out and around, another of the 12 million American working parents who've gotten to take a little time off when a baby was born or a parent was sick without losing their job because of the family and medical leave law. And that's made us a stronger nation.

Twenty-five million Americans—25 million Americans can be helped because the Congress finally passed the Kennedy-Kassebaum bill that says you can't lose your health insurance just because someone in your family's been sick or because you changed your job. Forty million Americans, because of the pension protection act of 1994, 40 million retired and still working Americans had their pensions protected, and I am very proud of that. I remember well when they weren't protected 10 years ago and how many people lost their retirement.

So it is clear that we are moving this country on the right track. The things—as the Vice President used to say—the things that ought to be up are now up, the things that ought to be down are now down; 1.8 million fewer people on welfare than 4 years ago, child support collections up 40 percent. What should be up is up; what should be down is down. This is good.

These things did not happen by accident. These things happened because we had a different philosophy of how the White House and Washington should work. I had never worked in Washington, except as a college student, until I became President. And I didn't like what I saw. There were too many people spending their time asking, "Who can I blame for this problem," and too few peo-